



# Philippians : A gospel that refuses to be contained

In the past three years of the pandemic, we have experienced home isolation, quarantine camps, and were even forced to cancel gatherings for a long time. How can we have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5) and be blameless children of God (Philippians 2:15) when we cannot gather or have difficulty contacting other brothers and sisters? When Paul wrote this letter, he was imprisoned and lacked freedom, but he was still able to exert his influence in prison and cared for brothers and sisters in different churches, setting a good example. The teachings in "Philippians" can definitely bring enlightenment and encouragement to our spiritual life after the pandemic.

Through studying Paul's letter to the Philippians, we can understand the church in Philippi. How was her relationship with Paul? What challenges was she facing? It is hard to imagine that this relational letter was written by Paul while he was in prison. Isn't it natural to grumble and go about your day when you lose your freedom? Where did Paul get his strength? How did the church in Philippi support him?

The church has established "Resting Weeks" to encourage disciples to study the Bible, meditate, reflect, and pray more to God. Through this two-week devotional journal and the rare opportunity to read the letter of Philippians, let us learn from Paul and the Philippian church together, and to love again as we did as new disciples.

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in Christ, Henry Au, HK Bible Teaching Team

# A Detective's mindset in bible reading (O.I.L.)

## ~ Application to the New Testament

How do you use the Detective Mindset (O.I.L.) when reading the New Testament letters? You can imagine yourself eavesdropping on the phone conversation between the suspect (Paul) and someone else (the recipient). You can only hear the voice of the suspect, but not the other party. The call was made by the suspect, so he obviously wanted to communicate something. You can only gauge the situation on the other side (in this case the church in Philippi) by what the suspect says.



### 1. Observe 👁️🔍 (Factual Observation)

- Who is the author and recipient of the letter? Is it for an individual, an entire church, or a specific group of believers?
- What is inside the author's wording? Tenderness, affirmation, sternness, toughness, worry, concern?
- What is the author talking about?
- How does the author move from one topic to another?
- Pay attention to transition words such as "because", "therefore", "however", "but", "since", so ... (Some versions omit these words, so it is very important to refer to more translations at the same time). This helps clarify cause and effect relationships.
- The original text is like the testimony of a witness, and the translation is the translated words of the witness. Therefore, knowing the original text will help you understand the original meaning. If you don't, comparing several translations will make it easier to grasp the original meaning. The most important thing is to figure it out through the overall context.
- When considering the overall context, it is not limited to only within the same chapter, because the entire letter is a whole. The original text did not have chapters and sections. These were added later for the convenience of searching.

### 2. Investigate 🧠 ? (Q&A)

- What is the author's purpose in writing the letter? Anyone who writes a letter has a purpose (cover letter, love letter, complaint letter, warning letter, confession letter...), of course, the author can achieve several purposes at the same time through the letter.

- Why would the author (suspect) say such things to the recipient?
- What exactly does the author (suspect) want to express to the other party?
- Why say these things? What is the purpose of this communication?
- How does what the author says have anything to do with the overall context?
- What do we know about the other party (the church) from what the author says?
- What problem is this church facing? What solution does the author propose?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this church?

### 3. Learn/Live (Understand God, others and yourself)

- Are we facing the same problems that the church is facing? Is there a church without problems?
- What is the relationship between the author and the recipient? How does this inspire us or what does this remind us of?
- What is the relationship between leaders and non-leaders?
- Brothers and sisters in this church were facing some struggles. Do we have these too? What about me personally?
- How will some good or bad behavior affect the church?
- Are the problems faced by every church the same? Why or why not?
- What do we learn from the author's attitude towards the church?
- What pathways can we follow and what pitfalls should we avoid?



Detective Mindset (O.I.L.) by Henry Au

# Background of Philippians

Philippi is located in the northeast of Greece, on the northern shore of the Aegean Sea, about 10 kilometers south-southeast from Neapolis, and about 30 kilometers southwest from Amphipolis. Philippi was founded in the fourth century BC and was later renamed by King of Macedonia Philip II. In 42 BC, two important battles took place here. Cassius and Brutus, who planned to assassinate Julius Caesar, committed suicide after the defeat of these two battles. After the war, Philippi became a Roman colony covering an area of 700 square miles (about 1,813 square kilometers).

Finds from archaeological excavations in Philippi today include a large and well-preserved square, a rectangular market place, an amphitheater, a prison where Paul is said to have been imprisoned, and several Byzantine churches, including one of the earliest churches in the Greek region. The sheer number of Byzantine churches found here shows the importance of Philippi to Christians during this period. Subsequent successive earthquakes not only destroyed many buildings, but may also be the main cause of the city's decline.



👉 diagram ~ left : prison remains; right: church (top) and market (middle) remains

The church in Philippi was founded by Paul himself. According to the records of Acts 16:11-15, Paul came here around AD 49. Philippi was the political center of the cities on the eastern Macedonian Plain, and its main population was "Gentiles" (non-Jews) such as Romans and Greek.

Apparently Paul was in detention when he wrote Philippians, as he described himself as "in chains" at least four times (1:7, 13, 14, 17). According to Acts,

Paul was imprisoned only three times. It has been speculated that, outside of the Acts record, Paul later left Rome for Spain (or elsewhere) and was finally imprisoned for a fourth time. According to this calculation, Paul was imprisoned four times, the first three were in Ephesus ("2 Corinthians" 1:8-10; "1 Corinthians" 15:32), Caesarea ("Acts" 23: 35; 24:27) and Rome (Acts 28:16)

The embedded evidence of this letter favors the traditional belief that Paul was imprisoned in Rome at the time, especially the statement in 1:13 that "As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ" and 4:22 "All God's people



Market remains.  
Philippians are a mix of Romans and Macedonians. Like ancient Romans. They were more down to earth, manly and straightforward and honest with their feelings. Unlike babbling philosophers from Athens or indulgent Greeks from Corinth.

here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household." And so on, all these show that Paul was at the place where the Roman emperor was. But no matter where Paul was imprisoned, it is certain that he used his time in prison to write several letters to various churches that became known as the "Prison Epistles", including "Philippians", "Colossians", "Ephesians", and "Philemon".

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## • Day 1 : Origins of the Philippians Church

### ◉ Scriptures : Acts 16:11-40

#### Acts 16:11-15 Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

**11** From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. **12** From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

**13** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14** One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. **15** When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

#### Acts 16:16-23 Paul and Silas in Prison

**16** Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. **17** She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." **18** She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

**19** When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20** They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar **21** by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

**22** The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.



**23** After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

## **Acts 16:24-40 The jailer and his family got baptized**

**24** When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26** Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. **27** The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28** But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

**29** The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. **30** He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

**31** They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." **32** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **33** At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. **34** The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

**35** When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." **36** The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

**37** But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

**38** The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. **39** They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. **40** After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

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## ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- ▶ The church in Philippi was established by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36 - 18:23) together with Silas and Timothy (Acts 16:1-3, 19). Luke, the author of Acts, also seems to have been a member of the missionary group (note the change from "they" in 16:8 to "us" in 16:10).
- ▶ Lydia was a Gentile woman who worshiped God. At that time, many Gentiles (or Greeks) were drawn to the God of the Jewish people (such as the centurion in the Gospel (Luke 7); Cornelius (Acts 10:22); "the godly" Greeks (Acts 17:4)).
- ▶ In the culture of Macedonia, the status of women was generally not low, and Lydia was one of the influential businesswomen. She was not only the first disciple of the church in Philippi, but also influenced a family to be baptized and follow Jesus. Her home also became the meeting point for the church in Philippi.
- ▶ We do not know how much time elapsed between the "later" in 16:16 and Lydia's baptism. The original text of "demon" (NIV) refers to the "spirit of divination". Evil spirits can also have a little fortune-telling ability. They know that Jesus is the supreme God, and that following Jesus is the way of salvation. Unlike Lydia, this handmaiden is of low status and belonged to multiple masters (16:19).
- ▶ Before Paul wrote the book of "Philippians" of the prison epistle, he had experienced being imprisoned in Philippi, and was beaten with sticks without a trial.
- ▶ Any male Roman citizen could accuse someone of a crime and seek to prosecute him or her before a jury court. It was illegal to beat Roman citizens indiscriminately (it is okay for other non-citizens), so the officials were afraid when they found out that Paul was a Roman citizen.

## ◉ Investigate (Q&A)

- ▶ What does "the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (16:14) have anything to do with Lydia's being a "worshiper of God"? Is the Lord's role in making disciples a helping or forcing one? Even with the Lord's help, who made the decision to pass the message on to her family?

- ▶ Many women also followed Jesus when He was on earth. Are women more receptive to the message of the Lord Jesus? What prevents men from accepting the gospel?
- ▶ Why didn't Paul cast out the fortune telling spirit from the slave girl on the first day? Did he know that this would get him into trouble? If so, why did he cast out the spirit? In addition, why did the evil spirit keep announcing Paul's identity to everyone? Of course, the masters did not want the maid to lose her "spirit of divination", but did the maid want to continue being possessed by evil spirit?
- ▶ Paul and Silas, who saved the maid from being demon-possessed, were imprisoned and tortured without being tried. They originally preached and saved people, but they were treated as felons and restricted from walking (16:24). Why could they still sing hymns? If they were just complaining, would the prisoners bother to listen?
- ▶ Why didn't Paul and the others escape immediately when they saw the prison and the locks being opened by a miracle? Why did Paul stop the jailer from hurting himself? God used a miracle to save him. How did Paul perceive this act of God?
- ▶ Why did the jailer take them home after he was ordered to strictly guard Paul and others? Was he not afraid of punishment from the officials?
- ▶ Why did Paul exercise his rights as a Roman citizen? Do you think he was doing it for himself, or for the other disciples in Philippi? How can you tell?
- ▶ Why is the name of the jailer not recorded in the Bible? Is it because his status is more inconvenient, especially since he had washed Paul's wounds privately and brought them home for dinner?
- ▶ "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household" (16:31) Was Paul prophesying to the jailer alone, or was he speaking to the general believers? Why?

### 🕒 Learn/Live ( Understanding God, others and yourself)

- ▶ What role can women play in the church? What can we learn from Lydia's example?
- ▶ The owners of the fortune-telling slave girl became rich listening to her predicting the future. Why did they ignore her proclamation that the disciples were telling them the way to be saved and even had Paul imprisoned? Faced with the choice of the way to fortune and the way to be saved, what did the owners choose?

- ▶ Was making a fortune or setting the slave girl free from a spirit more important? In the eyes of her owners, was the slave girl a tool or a person? Here we can see why the Bible said that money is the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10). How do I see money? Do I see money as more important than people?
- ▶ Paul's and Silas' ability to face trial with joy and faith encouraged everyone. Physically they were bound but spiritually they were free men, ironically it was the jailer who held the power to imprison them and he almost committed suicide when faced with his sin (16:27). What changed the jailer's heart? Not just a miracle, but the disciples' faith and forgiving love despite their suffering must have had an effect on him. How would this inspire us?
- ▶ Lydia and the jailer, upon becoming disciples, shared their faith with their family. Do we still eagerly invite our family and relatives to know God? Obviously, Lydia and the jailer had an influential position in their own families. How do I need to live out Christ in order to be able to influence my own family?
- ▶ A new year is starting, how can I help my family and relatives experience Christ and my love for them?



23/1/2023 (Mon)

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## ● Day 2: A Heart for Brothers and Sisters

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### ◉ Scriptures: Philippians 1:1-14

#### Philippians 1:1 - 8 Thanksgiving and Prayer

**1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

**2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3** I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

**7** It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. **8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

#### Philippians 1:9 -14 Express and Share

**9** And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, **10** so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

**12** Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. **13** As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14** And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

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## 🔍 Observe 👁️🔍 (Factual Observation)

- ▶ Even though we use the term "Paul's Letters", this letter was jointly written by Paul and Timothy to the church at Philippi. The recipients were all the members of the Philippian church, and in particular the leaders such as deacons and overseers.
- ▶ Paul built the Philippian church at around 49AD. He wrote this letter around 60-62AD when he was in jail in Rome. The Philippian church had been established for over ten years by then, with their own overseers and deacons.
- ▶ According to 《Acts》20:17 and 20:28, "overseers" (ἐπίσκοπος) and "elders" refer to the same kind of person. "Deacons" (διάκονος) originally meant servants or helpers, their role was to assist in the running of the church.
- ▶ According to 《1 Tim》3:1 - 13, there are different requirements for the qualities of deacons and overseers.
- ▶ Paul was in chains in Rome when he wrote this letter (1:13). Would he be remembering the time he was put in jail in Philippi (Acts 16)? Paul's imprisonment resulted in the spreading of the Gospel and his suffering resulted in the encouragement of many. He changed the lives of the prison guard and his family when he was imprisoned in Philippi.
- ▶ Paul began his letter with greetings, praises, blessings and sharing in his prayer for the Philippi church.

## 🧠 ? Investigate (Q&A)

- ▶ What do you think Paul's relationship with the Philippi church was like? "Acts" does not specify how long Paul stayed in Philippi, only that he visited again ("Acts" 20:3). It is also mentioned in "1 and 2 Corinthians" his plans to visit Macedonia (the area belonging to the Philippian region).
- ▶ God miraculously rescued Paul the night he was imprisoned in Philippi. Why didn't God miraculously deliver again when he was imprisoned elsewhere?

- ▶ Why was Paul able to be so expressive (appreciation, remembering, longing) to the Philippian congregation? How is this different from Chinese culture? What spiritual character traits are needed to be so expressive?
- ▶ If the congregation in Philippi was so good already, why did Paul still pray for their love to continue to grow and mature (1:9-11), and that they would be able to discern right from wrong and be honest? Who was Paul using as a benchmark?
- ▶ How was Paul able to be joyful in his suffering? What was his secret?

### o **Learn/Live** **(Understand God, others, and yourself)**

- ▶ Which brother or sister for whom when you think of or pray about would you remember with joy and thanksgiving like Paul (1: 3-4)? Would you like to be the reason others give thanks to God for?
- ▶ Were there really no faults with the congregation in the Philippi church? Or could it be that, even though there were flaws in the church, Paul chose to focus on and appreciate their good things? How would you feel if you were the one being praised and appreciated? Is it easy for you to express your appreciation for others?
- ▶ Let's try to learn from Paul in appreciating our brothers and sisters, giving thanks to God for good. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Paul could be joyful even in chains.
- ▶ Have you tried helping others become disciples? Ever experienced the joy and fulfillment in changing people's lives? Would you, like Paul, always be remembering your children through the gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15)?
- ▶ Paul's satisfaction in preaching the gospel was not only about successful examples. Paul was happy even if people didn't believe in the Gospel yet, he was glad to know that Christ was preached, or others knew that he had suffered for Christ. Do we have this attitude as well? Paul praised the church in Philippi, not because of their success rate in helping people know God, but because of their "partnership in the gospel from the first day until now".
- ▶ Is Paul an "optimist" by nature? From the rest of this book and his other letters, we know that is not the case. He did not rely on a happy-go-lucky attitude to comfort himself. Instead, he made a conscious decision to stay

positive and do the right thing in times of difficulty. Being in jail was a limitation, however he used that as an opportunity to witness for the Gospel (1:12-14). Likewise, losing one's freedom can be depressing, however, Paul used this time to write letters to encourage brothers and sisters in different churches. This is a valuable example for us.

- ▶ The pandemic has increased the distance between us. Have we, like Paul, been remembering our brothers and sisters nonetheless? If not, why? Paul said, "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus." Do we have the same kind of love for God's body? What can we learn from Paul? As pandemic restrictions start to loosen, would we cling to the connection with our brothers and sisters, or will the "new normal" after the epidemic continue to hinder our relationships?



## DAY 3 : Good deeds done with impure motives ?

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### ◉ Scriptures : Philippians 1 : 15 - 30

#### Philippians 1 : 15 - 20 Different motives to preach Christ

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

#### Philippians 1 : 21 - 30 the inclinations of Paul's heart

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

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## ◉ Observe 👁️🔍

- ▶ Paul mentioned that even those that preach Christ have different motives: some out of pure, some not pure. The NIV and NASB translate this part as 'out of selfish ambition'. The NLT translates this as 'with selfish ambition'. The Amplified Bible translates this as "out of selfish ambition [just self-promotion]". The Message translates this part as "hoping to get something out of it for themselves". H. T. Anderson's New Testament translates this part as "from a contentious disposition".
- ▶ 1:16 seems to indicate that those that preach out of jealousy and strife targeted Paul, seeing him as their competition. They were not like those that were motivated by a loving heart to preach Christ, believing that Paul had been sent to defend the gospel. From this we can see that the church was not unified in its support of Paul. Some treated him with envy and doubt.
- ▶ Paul acknowledged that the work of these envious people added to his suffering in chains (1:17).
- ▶ Based on the context, 'deliverance' in verse 19 ("what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.") refers to being freed from his chains and released, rather than referring to his salvation, especially because he refers to their "prayers and God's provision."
- ▶ 1: 28 "those who oppose you" (NIV) is translated as "your enemies" in the NLT and "your adversaries" in the NKJV and "your opponents" in the NASB.
- ▶ 1:30 while the NIV and NLT refer to "struggle", the ESV AND NASB mention it as "conflict"

## ◉ Investigate 🧠?

- ▶ Why would Paul mention people who preached from impure motives? Although we don't know what the Philippian church was facing at the time, by reading between the lines, what can we infer?
- ▶ Isn't preaching Christ a good thing? Why would some people do so for selfish reasons? Isn't Paul a good leader? He had already been imprisoned for preaching the gospel many times, why would some people still want him out of the way? Wasn't the Philippian church a really good church? Would there be envy and jealousy and competition in a good church? How did Paul look at this situation? How does God look at this situation?
- ▶ What can those that preach Christ from impure motives gain? Is this about actual material benefits or competing for talent? Is it really that surprising

that people in church compete for gain such as reputation, position? Isn't that part of our sinful nature?

- ▶ Why did Paul suddenly say "to live is Christ and to die is gain" and "I desire to depart and be with Christ"? How is this related to what was mentioned earlier about all this adding to his suffering? What supported him to continue to choose to remain (1:24)? Did he live for those that preached with wrong motives or did he live for those that preached with a pure and sincere heart?
- ▶ Who are the opponents Paul mentioned (1:28)? Would he suddenly mention enemies from outside? Or are these opponents people in the church that had selfish ambition and fought with him (1:15-18)? What does 'struggle' (1:30) refer to? How does this relate to what has been mentioned earlier in the passage and events?

### ◉ Learn/Live

- ▶ Paul chose not to mind about the motives of people preaching Christ and focused on the fact that he was preached (1:18), do you think God cares about the motives of our actions?
- ▶ Are you a leader? Here it reminds us that we need to be careful of our motive to lead and whether our motive is pure.
- ▶ Have you seen brothers and sisters envying each other in church? Or even among leaders, among leaders and the church congregation, or among the congregation? Like Paul, do you feel pained by these things? Despite this suffering, is it worthwhile responding with a sinful attitude towards people losing their passion and zeal? Instead of this, Paul encouraged those with pure motives, to not be stumbled by those that were sinful and to stand firm (1:27), and not to be intimidated (1:28) and suffer for the Lord (1:29).
- ▶ Jesus said there would be false prophets coming as wolves in sheep's clothing. In other letters, Paul also warns of the danger of false brothers (2 Cor 11:26, Gal 2: 4). Why would Satan leave us alone in church? Do you still remember Jesus's parable of the sower (Matt 13:24-30)?
- ▶ Paul longed to leave this life and be with Christ because then he would be absolutely free from the bonds and hurt of sin. This side of heaven we won't be free from the impact of sin in our families and church. But this is a struggle we submit to Christ and suffer for Him, a fight that is unavoidable.



## • DAY 4: Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus

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### ◉ Scriptures: Philippians 2:1 - 11

#### Philippians 2:1 - 4 Paul's response to current situation

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

#### Philippians 2:5 - 11 See Jesus Christ as the ultimate example of humility

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### ◉ Observe

- ▶ The term 'Therefore' (2:1) connects the following exhortation with what the church was facing mentioned earlier, so what follows isn't said as a general comment, out of context or without purpose. What Paul says directly addresses what the church was struggling with (1:30).
- ▶ Paul's teaching in this letter is about what the church still needs to grow in or has to do better in.
- ▶ In those that preached out of "selfish ambition", in 2:3 and 1:17 before, is translated into the original greek word as ἐριθεία. This term appears only

7 times in the New Testament. Two of these instances are found in Philippians. Paul uses this term to connect the teaching in 1:17 and 2:3.

- ▶ It turns out that focusing on the exhortation, comfort, mercy and compassion of Christ and the Holy Spirit enables us to be unified. Learning Christ's humility enables us to no longer focus on how we may be stronger than others. Instead we "in humility value others above yourselves" or to be more exact, it is that we "in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (ESV).
- ▶ Paul points out that though Christ is in nature God, he became a man, even dying on the cross. Crucifixion was a torturous capital punishment reserved only for the lowliest in society such as slaves, peasants and criminals. Most of the Philippians were Roman citizens and Roman citizens were exempted from this kind of death sentence. Christ's death on the cross is the ultimate example of humbling oneself.

### ◉ Investigate ?

- ▶ Up till now, have we been following what challenges the Philippian church was facing? If we just treat this letter as a compilation of moral principles, would we be aware of this subtext?
- ▶ Why did Paul exhort them to not only "look to your own interests"? Doesn't this imply that there were some among them that were doing exactly that?
- ▶ If you were among those that had gone on a wrong path, how would you feel about listening to Paul's reminder? What kind of response would be pleasing to God?
- ▶ Seeing how Paul dealt with spiritual issues within the church, how would others feel?
- ▶ Why did Paul need to point out the example of Jesus becoming incarnate and dying on the cross? Often, it isn't that we need direction, we need an example to follow.

### ◉ Learn/Live

- ▶ When reading Paul's letters, have you noticed how Paul was facing issues of a first century church that were real and was made up of living and breathing people? The teaching expressed here was addressing the issues that the church faced at the time. Even the first century church was not a

perfect church. How does this influence our own view of the church? Would it help us have a more mature understanding about the church?

- ▶ Even though Paul was not teaching a modern church, does this mean it has nothing to do with us? Of course not. “People always make the same mistakes”, perhaps the time period is different, but human nature, needs, struggles, weaknesses, etc are the same, therefore his teaching is an apt reminder to us too.
- ▶ What makes it difficult for people to be unified? 2:3-4 suggests it is selfish ambition, or forming cliques, or greed for temporal glory. How do these sins separate us from other people? In my own life, are there any relationships that have been hurt by my pride and people that I need to take the initiative to be reconciled with?
- ▶ Is selfish ambition a sin you struggle with often? How does Jesus’s example encourage you to lay yourself down?
- ▶ People want to prove their own importance but even though Christ was equal with God, he humbled himself and became a man and a servant, proving how important we are in God’s eyes.
- ▶ What do I need to change to help myself become more humble? Have I made my own things seem overly important? How can I see others as more important than myself so that I and other people can be “like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind” (2:2)?
- ▶ Please pray for yourself and the church to remain humble and able to see others as more important than ourselves.

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◉ Extension reading

- ▶ “About the Bible (1): Is the bible written to us? Or is it written for us? What is the difference between these two?” at Henry Au’s Theological Field at [henryau.org/2017/07/16/about\\_bible\\_1](http://henryau.org/2017/07/16/about_bible_1)





## ● DAY 5: Set apart

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### 🕒 Scriptures: Philippians 2: 12 - 18

#### Philippians 2: 12 - 18 A Life Set Apart

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

#### 🕒 Observe 🔍

- ▶ 2:2 “Therefore” in the original text is ‘since’, ‘so that’. This connects Christ Jesus’ humility not considering “equality with God something to be used to his own advantage” to what follows next.
- ▶ Paul reminds the Philippian brothers and sisters that they also need to humble themselves because Christ also humbled himself to the point of death. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place (2:8-11). But what does humble oneself here mean? Based on the previous passage, this points to the teaching in 2:1-4.
- ▶ Paul praised the Philippian congregation, as they had humbled themselves and been obedient while he had been with them and he believed they would still be obedient to his teaching now that he was not there.
- ▶ 2:12 is translated as “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” in the ESV. It reads “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” in the NIV. In The Message, this is translated as “Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God.” In J. B. Philips New Testament version, this is translated as “work out the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility”. The Amplified Bible translates this as “work out your salvation [that is,

cultivate it, bring it to full effect, actively pursue spiritual maturity] with awe-inspired fear and trembling [using serious caution and critical self-evaluation to avoid anything that might offend God or discredit the name of Christ]”. The NLT translates this as “Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.”

- ▶ 2: 12 “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (ESV)
- ▶ 2: 13 is translated as “for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” in the NIV. The NLT translates this as “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.” The Holman Christian Standard Bible translates this as “For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose.”
- ▶ 2:14 “Do everything without grumbling and arguing” is in the imperative/command form.
- ▶ 2: 17 drink offering, a reference to the Old Testament sacrifices of burnt and peace offerings. (Ex 29:38-41; Jer 23:13, Numbers 15:5)

### ◉ Investigate 🧠 ?

- ▶ Isn't salvation “by grace” and “through faith” (Ephesians 2:8-9)? Isn't salvation from God? Then why does 2:12 say that disciples “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling”?
- ▶ 2:13 mentions God works in us “to will” “to act” to “fulfill his good purpose”. This way we can understand that doing good works involves not just God at work but us too.
- ▶ Paul exhorted the Philippian congregation to hold to the message he preached to them so that his labor in their lives would not have been in vain (2:16). Does “the day of Christ” refer to his giving an account to Christ (Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 4:5)?
- ▶ The Philippian church was mostly composed of people with a non-Jewish background. Why would Paul use the Old Testament sacrificial system as a metaphor? How much did he expect them to be familiar with the Old Testament?

### ◉ Learn/Live 💡 👣

- ▶ In the bible, it is not difficult to find some teachings that are in a paradoxical or seemingly mutually exclusive relationship such as: the relationship between “human freedom” and “God's will”, “faith” and “behavior”, God's “love” and “justice”, etc. If you only grasp the truth of one, you might ignore the other. and vice versa. Just like 2:12-13 reminds

us that "being saved" is not only God's work, we also participate in it; but at the same time, our participation cannot be entirely based on our own efforts. We have to accept two seemingly conflicting truths at the same time: not only to work hard, but also to understand that God will help and work with us.

- ▶ Do we have Paul's idea that one day we will give an account/account before God of ourselves and those we influence (Matt. 25:14-30)?
- ▶ How can we be a flawless child of God in this "crooked and perverse generation"? Paul said that as long as you "do everything without complaining or arguing". It may sound easy at first, but the fact is that we are prone to "complaining and arguing" in schools, workplaces, and even at home and in church. This is our sinful nature! You can see it at a glance by looking at the views and comments on many online platforms. If we can be different, we can be a good witness to the world. Are you a person who is prone to "complaining and arguing"? On what occasions are you particularly prone to complaining? How can I remind myself to grow?



- ▶ Paul expected the Philippians, who were mainly Gentiles, to be familiar with the Old Testament. In fact, most of the letters in the New Testament are full of concepts and examples from the Old Testament, because the New Testament was not completed at that time, and their Bible was the Old Testament. Do you expect yourself to be familiar with the Old Testament as well? This is very helpful for us to understand the New Testament. Make some plans to learn more about the Old Testament.



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◉ Extension Reading:

- ▶ Related to the Bible (2) : We are Christians of the New Testament, why should we still read the Old Testament?



## • Day 6: No one is a Lone Ranger

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### ◉ Scriptures: Philippians 2: 19 - 30

#### Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29 So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

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### ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- ▶ Timothy was converted in Lystra on Paul's second missionary journey, (Acts 16:1). Timothy's mother was Jewish and his father was Greek, so Paul also circumcised him for the convenience of his gospel work among the Jews (modern Jews are also determined according to their mother's bloodline). Timothy was also involved in building the church in Philippi. .
- ▶ Paul pointed out that he intended to send Timothy back to Philippi to gather information about the church, but on the one hand, there was no one else who was with him in doing the work of Christ; In addition there was no one like Timothy who generally shared the same concern for the church in Philippi.
- ▶ Note that Paul did not know if he would get out this time (2:23), although he himself was optimistic (2:24). Compared with his missionary journey

many years ago in which the Holy Spirit guided him to Macedonia through a vision (Acts 16:9); now there is no hint, he can only rely on his own experience, wisdom, environment, etc. to judge and make decisions about his next steps.

- ▶ The New Testament only mentions Epaphroditus in Philippians (2:25; 4:18). He was sent by the church in Philippi to the place where Paul was imprisoned to support Paul's needs, and later stayed with Paul to become his co-worker.

## 🕒 Investigate 🧠 ? (Q&A)

- ▶ Didn't Paul have the ability to heal the sick (Acts 28:8)? Why couldn't he heal Epaphroditus? It can be seen that even if there was the gift of healing, it would not yield to human wish (Galatians 4:13 and 2 Timothy 4:20). Paul once mentioned to the Corinthian church that the source of gifts was the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11), and it was not determined by the will of man.
- ▶ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.(2:21). This is Paul's experience when he was in prison. How discouraging it was to go to jail for Christ and see others preoccupied with their own interests!
- ▶ Although Paul lamented that the people around him were not of the same mind, Epaphroditus, who was sent from Philippi, served Paul and the church disregarding his own life. How exactly did he help Paul while he was in prison? By risking his life, did he mean taking great risks to help Paul in prison, or did he mean taking risks in local evangelism?
- ▶ Since Epaphroditus was beneficial to his work, why did Paul let him go back? Did he consider only his own needs?

## 🕒 Learn/Live 💡👣 (Understand God, others and yourself)

- ▶ Many people wish that God would give them clear instructions to help them make certain important decisions, but even the apostle Paul, like us, could not predict the future (although God had revealed some things to him, such as: Acts 27 :21-25). Because of this, we need to use the wisdom God has given us, and let us humbly rely on Him. He didn't know if he could get out of prison, but he had to "take one step at a time" (2:23-24), and let Timothy accompany him while he was in prison.

- ▶ Even though Paul was strong, he needed Timothy and Epaphroditus by his side, and he was even reluctant to let Timothy leave him. No one is a lone ranger, we all need encouragement, companionship and support from others. Have you let other people approach you? On the other hand, are you willing to be someone else's "Epaphroditus" and support others?
  - ▶ Even though Paul saw Epaphroditus as an important companion, he sent him back for his own good (Epaphroditus missed his brothers and sisters in Philippi 2:26) and the good of the church in Philippi (2:27). Although he had a lot of needs, he was not only concerned with his own affairs.
  - ▶ How did Paul gain strength when he watched others just "look out for themselves"? Why did he want news from the church in Philippi? Would he not hope to get encouragement from it? Which brothers and sisters have discipleship lives that inspire you when you are discouraged? Did you let them know?
  - ▶ Do you have companions who love God with you and prosper in the gospel with you? How can we establish these relationships of "Walking together on the way to heaven"?
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## 🕒 Extended Reading

- ▶ Do disciples today still have the gifts of the Holy Spirit in prophesying, casting out demons, healing diseases, speaking in tongues and other miraculous gifts ?






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- Day 7 : Beyond the "Super Pharisee"

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Read on your own : Acts 9 : 1 - 8; 22:2 - 5; 26:9 - 11

◉ Scriptures : Philippians 3:1 - 11

Paul's second reminder to the church to rejoice

Philippians 3:1-11

[1]Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

[2]Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh.

[3]For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—

[4]though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

[5]circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;

[6]as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

[7]But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

[8]What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

[9]and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

[10]I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

[11]and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

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◉ Observe  (Factual observation)

- ▶ Earlier Paul had shared his situation, including the fact that no one was of one mind with him; but now he was encouraging the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord". This is not the first time the letter reminds them to "rejoice" (2:18), but Paul explicitly says he doesn't mind repeating it because it is what they need.
- ▶ "What kind of people does "dogs" (3:2) refer to? It is certainly a derogatory term when put together with "evil-doers" and "self-circumcisers". Jesus also mentioned "don't give the holy things to dogs" and the book of 2

Peter uses the term dog to describe those who later apostatized (betrayed the gospel)(2 Pet. 2:21-22). The Book of Revelation also uses the term "dogs" to describe those who cannot enter the Holy City of New Jerusalem. The term "self-circumcision" refers to Gentile believers who are not Jewish but who exalt themselves by circumcision (3:3; Gal. 5:2 - 12).

- ▶ The word "Pharisee" (3:5) means "one who is set apart". The original word "garbage (feces)" (3:8) is a rather vulgar word, somewhat like today's "dung" and "dregs," which implies abandonment and worthlessness.
- ▶ Paul, also known as Saul, whose Benjaminite ancestor, Saul, was the first king of Israel after the establishment of the kingdom. His past persecution of the church is described in Acts 9:1 - 8; 22:2 - 5; 26:9 - 11. Paul was no ordinary Jew. He was a "Super Pharisee", having been trained in the law by a famous Pharisee teacher.

### 🕒 Investigate Survey 🧠 ? (Self-questioning)

- ▶ What is "rejoice in the Lord" all about? Is "rejoice" a command? How did Paul manage to remain joyful when he was in prison, alone and lonely, and even remind others?
- ▶ Why did Paul remind the Philippians to rejoice and then turn to three groups of people he wanted them to guard against? Were these the same people he had mentioned as adding to his misery beyond his bondage (1:17)? Did he think of these troubling people and events again? So was his reminder to the Philippians to "rejoice in the Lord" also his own reminder to himself?
- ▶ Why did Paul give an account of his experience as a Jewish Pharisee? How did he view his experience (Acts 9:1 - 8)? What adjectives did he use to describe it?

### 🕒 Learn/Live 💡 🦶 (Understanding God, Man, and Yourself)

- ▶ "Rejoicing in the Lord" is a spiritual decision. While circumstances will not immediately improve, the focus remains on Jesus (3:10 His suffering, death and resurrection) and His love, and on those who continue to be faithful in spite of difficulties.

- ▶ The "Pharisees" were originally those who called the people back to God and "set themselves apart" when the Jews became Hellenistic and secularized. But by the time of Jesus, the Gospel accounts show them mostly as "self-righteous" and "hypocrites".
- ▶ Human nature is generally generous to ourselves and harsh to others. Do we tend to become "self-righteous" and look down on those around us? Is it easy for those who grew up in church or have been Christians for many years to feel that they are living a better life than others and forget that they are sinners who continue to need repentance and forgiveness?
- ▶ Before Paul met Jesus, the "righteousness" that he knew was built up by doing external acts, without love. So he could not truly love God and people, and he did not even think it was a problem to persecute and kill others. Only later did Paul wake up and realize that true righteousness comes from the love that Jesus sacrificed for him. The God of true righteousness did not give up his promise to Israel, and even brought the promise of Abraham to be the "father of many nations" (Genesis 17) to the world.
- ▶ The things that Paul valued before he knew Jesus were later considered worthless. Do I hold "the knowledge of Christ Jesus as my greatest treasure"? Or is my old self still struggling to come back? How do I find help to see the truth and find the pure heart I had when I was a new disciple?
- ▶ Christians should be familiar with the Old Testament and learn about Jewish culture because Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles were also Jews, and this will help us understand the thinking patterns of the New Testament writers. The other extreme, however, is too much emphasis on the priority of Jewish culture, becoming like the false teachers in the New Testament who teach that one must observe Jewish rules (such as circumcision, Sabbath, etc.) in order to be a Christian. This was something that Paul, who was the "apostle to the Gentiles", greatly opposed.

▶ **Extended Reading: do we need to follow laws in the Old Testament**






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## ● Day 8 : Eternal Rewards

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Read on your own : 1 Corinthians 15

### 🕒 Scriptures : Philipians 3:12 - 16

[12]Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

[13]Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

[14]I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

[15]All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

[16]Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

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### 🕒 Observe 👁🔍 (Factual Observation)

- ▶ 3:12 "already arrived at my goal" is also translated as "have been perfected" meaning completing in the passive tense meaning "being shaped to completion".
- ▶ Where the NIV translates this verse as "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." In the ESV, this verse is translated as "but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." (The NASB translation has 3:12 as "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.")
- ▶ 3:15 "Complete" (τέλειος) It is the same root word as the verb "to be perfect" in 3:12. It stands for "mature", "adult", "fully developed".
- ▶ 3:14 Paul uses the metaphor of the Christian life as a runner. He invites "brothers" (and of course sisters) to run this race with him, working for the prize Christ has prepared for us at the finish line.
- ▶ 3:16 "Only let us hold true to what we have attained." (ESV) , "let us keep living by that same [standard] to which we have attained." (NASB)

## ◉ Investigate 🧠 ? (Self-questioning)

- ▶ What does "gain" mean? According to the previous verse, it means "to gain Christ" (3:8), to know the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ (3:10 - 11). Is it that Paul had not yet received the "resurrection of the flesh"?
- ▶ Earlier, Paul mentioned the time when he was a Pharisee. Does "forgetting what is behind" refer to himself at that time? Or does it refer to the "self-righteousness" that he sought at that time? Does "ahead" refer to imitating Christ's suffering and death? Or does it refer to the expectation of a Christ-like resurrection? At the beginning of the epistle, Paul also mentioned that he "would rather leave this world and be with Christ, which is better by far" (1:23).
- ▶ Paul had planted many churches and accomplished many things by this time, but he still felt that the work of Jesus Christ in him was not yet complete/ fulfilled. Do you feel that God's work in you is complete? If you compare yourself to Christ, you would see that there is still a lot of maturity and growth to be done. If Paul, who was full of experience, said he was still pursuing it with all his might, how can we stop?
- ▶ Philippians 3:16  
Only let us live up to what we have already attained.  
Is it like Jesus said in Matthew 19:11 Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given"  
Does it mean that God will have expectations according to how much we have understood?

## ▶ Learn/Live 💡 👣 (Understanding God, Others and yourself)

- ▶ Do you often think about the resurrection? Can resurrection give you comfort when life is full of difficulties? The horror of death is that it mercilessly takes everything away, while resurrection keeps hope alive.
- ▶ Paul did not fear death, and even longed to leave this world to be with Christ (of course he would not kill himself), precisely because he knew that a better and more beautiful reward was waiting for him. Does it excite you to be resurrected not to face the decaying flesh of this life, but a different spiritual body; not to face the sins of this world, but to fully receive the coming of the kingdom of God? When confronted with the sufferings of this world and the damage of sin, one understands the feeling of

"willingness to leave this world and be with Christ". Read 1 Corinthians 15 for a moment and think of the resurrection. Those who have run the race of this life and have fallen asleep in the Lord will wake up to the day of resurrection and the final judgment of the dead (1 Cor. 15:52)

- ▶ But Paul told us not to look only to the world of the future. He knew that we have not yet reached the perfection that Christ wants us to reach, so we must still pursue it.
- ▶ Most athletes work hard all their lives to win medals and spend their entire athletic careers hoping to become world champions. But even with all the hard work, the number of medal winners is still very small, and there is often only one winner in a race. However, those who run this Christian race can win the prize together with others, although the pace of everyone is different, they can still win the same prize! If there were an awards ceremony, you might regard it as unimpressive, but if you were the slow one, you would be grateful for God's generosity, just as you were grateful for the generosity of the vineyard owner in the parable of the vineyard (Mt 20:1 - 16).



## • Day 9 : Who should you imitate?

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### ◉ Scriptures: Philippians 3:17 - 21

#### Imitate Christ

##### Philippians 3:17-21

[17]Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

[18]For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

[19]Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

[20]But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

[21]who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

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### ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- ▶ Paul again makes an intimate appeal to the church, referring to them as "brothers and sisters", asking them to imitate him and those who walk as he did.
- ▶ Paul referred to people who do not walk in their ways as "enemies of the cross of Christ". Were these people in the church? Or were they outside the church? If they were outside, why compare them with others? Why did Paul shed tears over this (3:18)?
- ▶ 3:20 "Citizens of heaven"(CNV)/ " Countrymen of heaven" (CUV) or "our citizenship is in heaven" (ESV). The city of Philippi was granted Roman citizenship because it had served the Roman Empire in war; but Paul reminded the church that the disciples' citizenship is in heaven. Note here that it is not we who ascend when the Lord returns, but He who descends from heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:15 - 16; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:1, 8; Rev. 1:7; 21:2)
- ▶ Philippians 3:21 "will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." It refers to our resurrected bodies. In Greek culture, people believed in the "immortality of the soul" and that the "soul" was more noble than the "body". But the Bible says that even after we are

resurrected we still have a physical body, but this body is no longer perishable, no longer dead, and has more glory (1 Cor. 15:35-54). Paul again encouraged his brothers and sisters with the glory of the resurrection.

## 🕒 Investigate 🧠 ? (Q&A)

- ▶ What does "enemies of the cross" mean? It is said here that they "act" in contradiction to the spirit of sacrifice and love of the cross, but satisfy their own desires and think only of earthly things. Why specifically use the word "act"? Does it mean that what they say is different from what they actually do?
- ▶ 3:19 It is stated that the end of the "enemies of the cross" is "destruction", which is translated as "perishing" in the original text.
- ▶ There is a school of eschatology that believes in "eternal suffering / Eternal Torment). But this verse seems to support the "extinction theory / Annihilationism" believed by another school of thought.
- ▶ According to Paul, are there people in the church who cannot be saved? Is this the reason for his tearful exhortation not to follow the example of these people?

## 🕒 Learn/ Live 💡 👣 (understanding God, others and yourself)

- ▶ Who should we imitate? Who are you imitating? Which is easier, to imitate the spirit of Christ's cross or to focus on earthly matters?
- ▶ Have you paid attention to those who insist on taking up the cross of Christ (3:17)?
- ▶ Even among us, there are those who may not be saved in the end, what is the impact on you? Yes, no one is justified by works, but Paul also reminds us to "walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1:27), and 1 Peter mentions that "judgment begins at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). Does what we do match what we confess with our mouths and believe with our hearts? This is a very challenging reminder, so the scriptures also remind us to exhort one another, lest "any of you be deceived by sin and hardened in heart" (Heb. 3:13). These verses tell us that "once saved, always saved" is not what the Bible teaches.



## • Day 10 : Names in the Book of Life

### ◉ Scriptures : Philippians 4:1 - 3

[1]Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! [2]I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. [3]Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

### ◉ Observe 👁🔍 (Factual Observation)

- ▶ Paul again expressed his "longing" for his Philippian brothers and sisters, even calling them his joy and crown. A "crown" is a prize for the winner of a sports competition, and although it is not a financial reward, it represents glory and prestige. The winner was entitled to have a statue built in his image and to celebrate his victory in his hometown. It



- was a great encouragement to Paul that they stood firm spiritually.
- ▶ Some people have lost their faith by going with the flow, so those who stand firm are all the more treasured.
- ▶ Paul did not explicitly state in his letter who the "enemies of the cross", opposing him (3:18) were, but mentioned the names of the two sisters, Euodia and Syntyche, and the brother Clement.
- ▶ (Yes, I ask you also, true companion) Who was it? The original meaning of the word is "a companion bearing the same yoke". We cannot be sure who the apostle had in mind, because "bearing the same yoke" (ἡ σύζυγος) could mean "wife", so some think it referred to Paul's wife (of course there is no scripture that says Paul had a wife, 1 Cor 9:5). Others think it refers to the brothers who were in prison and suffering with Paul. Others think it could be Luke the doctor, who was involved in the finding of the Philippian church (see the first point in the Day 1 devotional "Observations") and was

a close companion of Paul (Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 1:24). Why did Paul not say so? Did the disciples in Philippi know who he was referring to?

## ◉ Investigate ? (Q & A)

- ▶ What happened between the two sisters, Euodia and Syntyche, that Paul had to mention in his public letters? Was their unity problem so apparent to all that Paul made a public appeal? Of course, their problems should not be very serious, because he also pointed out that they were good co-workers, and their names are in the book of life. When he proposed these three names, did he want others to learn from them and support them?
- ▶ "The Book of Life" (Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 4:3; Ezekiel 13:9; Daniel 12 :1; "Revelation" 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 20:15; 21:27) the concept also appears in the "Old Testament" and "New Testament". Jesus did not mention such a booklet, but said, "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).
- ▶ Is the one whose name is in the book of life the same as the previous "citizenship in heaven" (3:20)?

## ◉ Learn/Live (Understand God, others and yourself)

- ▶ Some people think that Paul was sexist as he only mentioned "brethren" when he wrote to the church. However, he often named the women who worked with him, including Eodia and Syntyche. Paul openly asked them to be of one mind, not hoping that everyone would blame them, but to help them, and pointed out that their names and the rest of the co-workers are in the book of life. Paul's mention of only "brethren" was a cultural convention; both Jesus and Paul had many close female companions who worked together for the gospel. The Philippian church also started as a house church at Lydia's place.
- ▶ Can you get along well with the opposite sex? Jesus and Paul lived in an era when women had a low status, but they cared for, respected and appreciated the opposite sex (Jesus first appeared to women after his resurrection; Paul first preached the gospel to women in Philippi). The "manly man" in the "Bible" has nothing in common with today's "male

chauvinism". The relationship between brothers and sisters in the church should be a beautiful testimony in the world.

- ▶ God should not need a notebook to remember us; but we need to know whether our name will be written in the "Book of Life". No one can write their names into the book of life "in their own strength", so we should encourage each other, remind each other, and help each other to stand firm in the Lord.
- ▶ Who is "yoked" with you on your journey of discipleship? Who is the crown of your life? Whose confidence can be your motivation? Please continue to pray for them and tell them that you are thinking about them as well.
- ▶ If you haven't built these mutually supportive relationships, start working on them this year. We all need each other!



## • Day 11 : Rejoice in the Lord

### ◉ Scriptures : Philippians 4:4 - 7

### Third reminder from Paul

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- "When something is important, mention it three times", Paul reminded the church to rejoice for the third time (2:18; 3:1; 4:4).
- v5 "gentleness" (ἐπιεικής): This word also occurs in other New Testament passages: "mild" (1 Timothy 3:3; 1 Peter 2:18); "peaceful" (Titus 3:2); "gentle" ("James" 3:17).
- Should it be "Let your gentleness be evident to all" Because "the Lord is near"? Or since "the Lord is near" Therefore "do not be anxious about anything"? Or both?

### ◉ Investigate (Q&A)

- ▶ In "Let your gentleness be evident to all", who were the audience? Did it refer to the people inside or outside the church?
- ▶ What the church needed to be known for is not talent or wealth but "gentleness"! This echoes what Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek! For they shall inherit the land" (Matthew 5:5)
- ▶ What does "the Lord is near" mean? Was it Paul who misunderstood the imminent return of Christ? But Jesus said early on, "No one knows that day and that hour." Paul and the other apostles also knew that the day of the Lord's return would be like a thief ("1 Thessalonians" 5:2, 4; "2 Peter" 3: 10; Revelation 3:3; 16:15). Or is he referring to "Psalm" 145:18 "The Lord is

near to all who call on him, to those who call on him in truth", or in the book of James "Come near to God and he will come near to you." (Jas 4:8), it means that we should let God draw close to us through prayer, petition and thanksgiving?

## 🕒 Learn/Live (Understand God, others and yourself)

- ▶ Paul told us "not to be anxious about anything", and Jesus also told us "do not be anxious" (Matthew 6:25-34). Paul was in prison, so could he really have nothing to worry about? Would he not be afraid of never being able to leave (1:19)? Would he not care about Philippi or other churches (2 Corinthians 11:28)? Would he not be concerned or outraged by those who were influencing the Gentiles, saying that one had to be a Jew to be a disciple? Wouldn't he be worried that in the end no church was willing to support him, and no co-worker was willing to stay by his side? Would he not be discouraged by those who were looking after their own interests rather than those of Christ? Would he not doubt whether everything that he had done was worthwhile?
- ▶ With all these in mind, Paul was still able to decide "not to be anxious about nothing", to "rejoice in the Lord," and to teach others to do the same. We see "a peace that surpasses all understanding" (meaning "unbelievable!") living in his life, which is really inspiring.
- ▶ "The peace of God" is the result of "telling God what we want". Paul did not say that we would get what we want through prayer, but that we would have the peace that would guard our hearts and minds.
- ▶ Did Paul pray daily that he would be free again? Of course he did, but he did not lose heart during the wait, and even firmly believed that through everyone's prayers he would eventually be released (1:19). Scholars agree that he was finally released from this imprisonment, but not the one after writing the letter 2 Timothy. According to traditional church records Paul was martyred in Rome, being beheaded by King Nero.
- ▶ Have you released your worries to God? Try to entrust them to God like Paul through prayer, supplication and thanksgiving, so that we can also receive the peace that surprises even those around us.



2/2/23 (Thu)

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## • Day 12 : Thought and Action

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### ◉ Scriptures : Philippians 4:8 - 9

#### Final Words

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

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### ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- ▶ What are we thinking about and doing on a daily basis? These are all important.
- ▶ If we want to have "the peace of God" (4:9), we also need to have relatively positive thoughts and actions.
- ▶ Paul expected those around him to actively learn what he was doing. Elsewhere, he said that he, too, was merely imitating Christ (3:10; 1 Corinthians 11:1).
- ▶ As far as the content of Philippians is concerned, what character have we noticed in Paul that we should emulate? What good virtues were there in the Philippian church that we should imitate?

### ◉ Investigate (Question and Answer)

- ▶ Why are there so few great men and women? The twelve apostles followed Jesus for more than three years. Why weren't the disciples like Him when Jesus was crucified? Why have we watched the Olympics, the World Cup, and listened to concerts, but our physical fitness, ball skills, and singing skills have not improved? Is it enough to just look and just listen?
- ▶ Paul was not like other apostles who had truly lived with Jesus, so why was he as influential as Jesus? Appreciation alone will not bring about change.

Paul deliberately imitated Jesus. Imitating the suffering and even the death (3:10).

## ◉ Learn/Live (Understand God, others and yourself)

- ▶ What is the thing you most often think about? Is it the negative thoughts, or the ones Paul mentioned that give you strength? Will you also follow the virtues of others you have heard and seen?
- ▶ Human nature is often most attracted by conspiracy theories, gossip, other people's embarrassment, failure, etc., "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.." ("Proverbs" 18:8 "). It takes extra effort and intent to make thinking about the "true, honorable..." a habit.
- ▶ If YouTube, Facebook video, Instagram Reels, etc. are played continuously for 24 hours, how much of the content is "righteous and clean"? Are we used to these things as "entertainment"? If things go on like this, we will gradually lose the distinction between what is righteous and what is pure? Where can we find "righteous and pure" things to stir our hearts?
- ▶ "Lovely and Admirable": What is praised in a place will become the culture of that place; and the culture of that place will in turn shape the people in it. Therefore, different schools, institutions, and societies are also cultivating people of different cultures. Paul hoped that the church would be a place to praise virtue, sacrifice, self-denial, frankness, etc., and to shape a culture of righteousness, purity, etc.
- ▶ Do we have the strength to work for God if our focus is on the mistakes and sins of others? In the daily conversations between brothers and sisters, do they discuss good things and other people's good deeds?
- ▶ Why do we have a tradition of "sharing the good news"? Don't you just want to hear more "true, respectable...virtuous...praise"? Look no further than these things! There are too many negative things in the media, which make us easily disappointed in human nature and do not believe that people can change; but every story of change and every good deed for God is the driving force for us to persist and grow.
- ▶ Do you pay attention to the good deeds among brothers and sisters? Can you think about what God has done in you and share your gratitude? How long has it been since you shared it with others?

- ▶ We cannot look at Jesus and Paul solely from the perspective of appreciation. We have to do it, let the world see that we are disciples of Christ, and demonstrate the power of the gospel.



## • Day 13 : The secret to being content

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### ◉ Scriptures : Philippians 4 : 10 - 14

#### Paul's Secret

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

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### ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- ▶ Paul not only asked the Philippian church to rejoice (4:1), but he himself also "rejoiced greatly in the Lord". What was the reason? It is actually mentioned in later verses (4:15-17) that the church in Philippi wanted to support Paul financially again. Although this had not happened yet, Paul was rejoicing in it already
- ▶
- ▶ Paul said he was content whatever the circumstances. However he was not like that in the beginning, he had to learn it.
- ▶ For Paul, the Philippian church sharing his needs meant sharing in his sufferings (4:14).

### ◉ Investigate (Question and Answer)

- ▶ How did Paul "learn" the secret of contentment? It's not just talking on paper, he's going through different situations and sticking to it. Paul asked others to follow his example, but without the same experience, could they really learn? He himself said that the power of Christ's resurrection can only be learned through imitating Christ's suffering (3:10).
- ▶

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength" is often said to be one of the top ten most popular scriptures. But when Paul said this, what was he trying to point out? What does "everything" mean? Would it refer to something that is difficult or even impossible to accomplish? Who is it that "gives me strength"? According to the context, how should we understand this "golden quote"?

## 🕒 Learn/Live (Understand God, others and yourself)

- ▶ From the context, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" does not mean that with God in mind we can accomplish any challenge, or that God promises that we can solve all problems. What Paul is saying is that he can handle any situation by relying on God (especially referring to the situations of lowliness, hunger, lacking, etc. in 4:12). But I believe that this scripture did not become the 10 most popular because of this "ordinary" understanding.
- ▶ Interpreting the scriptures out of context, of course we will have a lot of encouraging and inspirational material, but it will also make us misunderstand that Christians will have an easier life than non-Christians, and will have fewer difficulties and more blessings. These are just as incorrect as the false teachers who preach the "prosperity gospel." However, Paul was still in prison when he said this, he did not know when he would be released, and his needs had to be met by brothers and sisters; but he was not disheartened or discouraged, and he was still full of joy and love in his sufferings, preaching the gospel to others, writing Letters encourage the Church... This is the "peace beyond all understanding." If God only grants success, fulfilled wishes, and health to Christians, isn't the relationship between man and God just a transaction? Are acting in righteousness and love just ways to profit?
- ▶ People don't like "humble", "hungry" and "lacking" situations, but they like the days of "abundance", "prosperous" and "more than enough". But both good times and bad times can be a test. When there is plenty, we may be prone to complacency, thinking that everything is due to our own talents and efforts, and we deserve it; when there is a lack of adversity, we may also be overwhelmed by complaints or discouragement. Therefore, it is not an easy task to maintain a state of Godly content despite ups and downs. For you, what situation tests you the most? From your past experiences, what weaknesses have you noticed in yourself?





## • Day 14: Growing Fruits

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### ◉ Scriptures: Philippians 4:15 - 23

#### Grateful to the Philippian Church

15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more ("the fruit" in NKJV) be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen

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### ◉ Observe (Factual Observation)

- ▶ 4:22 "Caesar's household". Did he mean the Caesar who was ruling the place where he was imprisoned? It was Nero, an infamous tyrant.
- ▶ Paul mentioned something that was not described in Acts 16, namely, that during the missionary journey in Macedonia, only the church in Philippi provided financial support, and they continued to give support once or twice even after Paul left Philippi.
- ▶ Paul was more than satisfied with what he had and wanted the Philippians to have their needs met. But he also pointed out that their offerings, like the sacrifices of the Old Testament, were a fragrance pleasing to God (4:18; Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17).
- ▶ The Bible teaches us God who is merciful will give abundantly to those who are moved to give. "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:25)。

### ◉ Investigate (Question and Answer)

- ▶ Why did Paul write Philippians? Certainly not just to thank them for their gift. Looking at the whole book, Paul wanted to thank the Philippian

church for their relationship with him, and on the other hand, he wanted to remind the church to be careful of some false teachings. Finally, he encouraged them to continue to imitate the example of Christ and to be blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.

- ▶ What is the "fruit" in 4:16? The fruit of spiritual growth (Galatians 5:22-23)? The fruit of light (Ephesians 5:9)? The fruit of righteousness (Philippians 1:11)? The fruit of good works (Colossians 1:10)? Fruit of praise (Hebrews 13:15)? The fruit of preaching ("Romans" 1:13; "John" 15:16)? Or does it mean the outcome of life (Philippians 1:22; Romans 6:21)? Of course all of the above can be included.
- ▶ Does God need our sacrifices or offerings? Does God need our service? Yes and No. "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1); nor "served by human hands, as if he needed anything" (Acts 17:24-25). Materially God does not need our sacrifices or services, but relationally He wants us to express our gratitude and love to Him (Psalm 50:14-15) and to work with us (1 Corinthians 3:9), live with us (Revelation 21:3).

### ◉ Learn/Live (Understand God, others and yourself)

- ▶ From the letter to Philipians, what is God's desired church like? What kind of disciple does God want?
- ▶ The church in Philippi supported Paul's preaching work, gave Paul encouragement when he was in prison, and helped people in Macedonia hear the gospel. They really did "not only care about their own business, but also care about other people's business." There are still many people in mainland China and the world who have not heard the Gospel. Can we be a blessing to others like the church in Philippi? How can we be involved?

## Epilogue : Having the same mindset as Christ Jesus

I remember that when I first became a disciple, I really liked reading Paul's letters. At that time, I felt that Paul was very "Cool". He transformed from a villain who persecuted the church to a hero who built many churches. He was eloquent and influential in Acts. If asked me who my favorite character in the New Testament besides the Lord Jesus is, there is no doubt that it is Paul.

When I read Paul's letters before, I only paid attention to the moral teachings in them, what to do and what not to do. I felt that his teachings were simple and straightforward, very easy to memorize, and more suitable for "encouraging" others. At that time, I regarded the content of these letters as Paul's words directly to myself, and I never considered that Paul's letter was actually written for a group of disciples who had existed and lived in history.

After reading the contents of the epistle carefully, I began to seriously consider why Paul gave different teachings to different churches. Reading between the lines, I tried to understand the different churches in the "New Testament Letters", and understand the different situations and difficulties that brothers and sisters were facing at that time. After careful investigation, it turns out that many churches were also facing different problems. If it weren't for these, maybe Paul wouldn't have needed to write so many letters at all! When I started to see this, it almost drastically changed my impression of the "perfect" first-century church. If the church led by the apostles in the first century had many problems, how about us today?

Even so, I think it is a necessary process of spiritual maturity. When we open our eyes to see the flesh and blood (sinful) disciples of the church in the first century, and try to understand the challenges and struggles they faced, we will appreciate their persistence and sacrifice even more. The church in Philippi can be regarded as a very encouraging church. They had always supported Paul's preaching work, not only financially, but also sent Epaphroditus to help. However, such a church that gave Paul a lot of joy and comfort could not avoid Satan's attacks: We saw that some of them challenged Paul's leadership, some taught the disciples to abide by Jewish rules, some were preoccupied with their own affairs, and some were

preoccupied with the world, making their own stomachs their god.... Paul was indignant and wept for these people, calling on everyone not to imitate them, but to imitate himself and even Christ, and also warned these people that their continuing in their sin would mean destruction.

Not only was Paul not discouraged by this, but he showed the peace and joy of relying on God in the midst of hardship; when he told his disciples to "have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (2:5), he lived out his own teachings in loneliness. I think that when Christ was crucified, there were as few people around as when Paul was in prison! Paul may have written Philippians simply to encourage the churches in and around Philippi, but the last letter was circulated in the first century and later became part of the canon, read by millions. People have read it, and it has reminded and inspired many. I don't think he knew that the letter written in the dark room would have this effect. Although isolated because of his imprisonment, the gospel of Christ that Paul preached was not contained. Although Paul finally died by the sword of the Roman emperor, the gospel of Christ finally conquered the Roman Empire.

What Philippians showed me was not the Paul who passed by when I was young, but a Paul who was humble, expressive, rich in emotion, and had the image of Christ. I sincerely hope that through this letter, brothers and sisters can also learn to "have the mindset of Christ Jesus" together, and continue to spread the good news of eternal life with love.

Brother in Christ  
Henry Au  
HK Bible Teaching Team



## Appendix : Paul's second missionary journey



Year: Around AD 60-62

1. Acts 15:22-38 Paul and Barnabas were sent from Jerusalem to Antioch to work.
2. Acts 15:39 Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus.
3. Acts 15:40-41 Paul travels through Syria and Cilicia strengthening churches.
4. Acts 16:1-5 Paul goes to Derbe, Lystra and Iconium.
5. Acts 16:6-10 Paul passed through Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and arrived at Troas.
6. Acts 16:11-40 Paul goes to Philippi.
7. Acts 17:1-14 Paul went to Thessalonica and Berea.
8. Acts 17:15-18:18 Paul went to Athens and Corinth. Lived in Corinth for a year and a half.
9. Acts 18:19-21 Paul goes to Ephesus.
10. Acts 18:22 Return to Jerusalem via Caesarea.

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